1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

they point to the major functions of the event. Certainly it marks publicly the opening of the gates on the road to manhood for the young man, but, much more importantly, it validates, strengthens and dramatizes the relational network of ties that the family and the household maintain and attempt to promote in the society.

At some of the larger ceremonies, especially those held by the high-ranking households in Bornu, there is often a small group of recent converts who ask to join the ceremony in order to mark their religious conversion and obtain full membership in Kanuri society. In one very large circumcision we saw forty-seven boys from high status households and ten Cameroon pagans ranging in age from fifteen to thirty-five. These latter seemed completely ecstatic to have been accepted at the ceremony and were the subject of much ribald joking by the Kanuri participants. However they now had an easier access to Kanuri women as wives and sweethearts, and it is conceivable that when they do in fact marry Kanuri women they and their descendants will eventually be absorbed into Kanuri society. Thus the circumcision ceremony is one of the important gateways into society for non-Moslems from the small tribes surrounding Bornu on its southern and southeastern borders.

As in many cultures around the world, the Kanuri themselves regard the circumcision ceremony as a mark of approaching manhood, and even though the boys are often quite young the ceremony still dramatizes their adult or approaching adult status. Thus after the boys have come out of confinement during which the cut heals, they are given whips which they brandish while chasing and threatening the young girls. The girls must "buy off" such treatment by giving the young boy a few pennies. This ritual was left unexplained by informants who answered questions about its meaning by saying, "We do this because it is our custom." However, it seems likely that it is a symbolic reference to the achievement of manhood or potential manhood. It symbolizes through ritual the cultural value of male dominance which the boys must now begin to practice as they prepare to join the ranks of adult men. The "buying off" of the beating by the little girls can be interpreted to reflect the flexibility of female submissiveness; a woman must behave submissively towards a man but she has levers to gain her own rights and wishes in her relationships with men.

Adolescence

As we have seen, there is an extra age-grade period for boys which lasts from around the time of circumcision to their first marriage between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. At first the young man is still thought of as a small boy, but as he advances into middle and late teenage years he becomes more of a *zairo*—that is to say, a young bachelor. He associates in his free time with other young men his age and begins to gossip about trade, politics, and nocturnal adventures with women. Young boys generally obtain their first sexual experience in their mid to late teenage period from divorced women who are often older than themselves. In their later teens and early twenties they begin to have more serious love affairs of longer duration with young divorced women who may turn out to be their future wives if their first marriages are not already arranged by their parents.

Sitting and listening to a group of these young men discussing matters of

It is accepted that a man court-
586 ing a zogor has sex relations with her. The zogor differs
836 from a prostitute, who takes money from each man who has sex
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587 relations with her. Prostitutes are known, and the practice
548 of prostitution is abhorred; zogors exist everywhere as a nat-
831 ural part of Kanuri social organization. The zogor does not receive payment for her services, nor does she ever receive several men in one night, a characteristic of prostitution which the Kanuri particularly single out as repellent to them. A zogor regularly is visited by the same man for a period of weeks. Ideally, this ends in marriage; however, if they find themselves incompatible the relationship is terminated and someone else comes to court the zogor, while the man enters into a
626 new relationship with another zogor. A woman who prolongs her status as a zogor for several years, because she enjoys the freedom which is permitted a zogor, or because she enjoys the attentions of many men without the responsibilities of marriage, begins to be thought of as a loose woman by the community. Few men would marry such a woman because such a marriage would not be expected to last.

595 Should a man have one wife and wish to marry a second, a zogor, he would begin to pay attention to the zogor. Noticing this, his first wife might become jealous, and might ask him, "What are you doing talking to that zogor?" Should he answer that he wishes to marry her, the issue is settled, as it is perfectly reasonable for a man to contemplate taking a second wife. However, attitudes towards a second wife vary among Kanuri wom-

587 of the wife, in numbers, bring her clothing and belongings through the streets to her new husband's home. Later that night the bride herself comes, accompanied by her very close friend (kususu). There is no ceremony corresponding to that which takes place when a virgin marries. The following day, her friends cook the morning meal for her. After that, she cooks her own [595] food. A man with a previous wife who marries a zogor will sleep with his new wife for three consecutive days. After the three initial days, he spends one night with each wife in regular rotation, as is the normal practice of a man with more than one wife.

589 Bachelors are very rare. The primary informant in this [115] area, Ya Mogorom, a woman of about fifty who is herself a grandmother several times, could not think of a single adult male who had never married, though she said that it did occasionally occur. Spinsters are just as rare, and Ya Mogorom could name only a sixteen year old girl who was not yet married as an example of an adult female who had never married. 583 836 Common-law marriages as such do not occur. A woman living with a man but not married to him is his nəmgəmtəm, and is quite distinct from 587 his wife as she never cooks for him. Until the age of fifty a zogor will remarry; beyond that she does not attempt to remarry. A man will remarry as long as he is able to have intercourse. 581 887 Sometimes old people marry for convenience, after they can no longer have intercourse. She cooks his food, and he provides her with clothing and other things.

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429 economic subordinates more closely to the exercise of his power and authority. In cases where this is less of a consideration (e.g. in marriages between peasant households) then the sheer economic benefit of the marriage to the luwali becomes the primary determinant in the
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565 decision. Among peasants it is not considered desirable to marry with traditionally regarded low status persons (male or female speaking) such as drummers-entertainers, slaves, butchers, blacksmiths, tanners, petty brokers, or anyone whose birth is considered illegitimate.(conceived out
[848] of wedlock). This results in a certain amount of endogamy among these occupation groups excluding illegitimates who are pariahs in the eyes of all.

582 Kanuri marriages are governed by the following rules of incest.. Marriages with parents or their siblings, own full or half siblings are forbidden, and this rule carries over to compounds into which ego's parents have remarried where no real biological relationship with ego's parent's new spouse's children obtains. It is culturally prescribed that ego (a male) may not marry a matrilateral parallel cousin, although several upper class informants felt that this was a custom of the people and not a Muslim ordinance. No marriages of the latter variety were observed during the field research. It is considered wrong (i.e. shameful) to marry wives of consanguinal kin of any generation after they have divorced ego's kin member. No reason was given for this rule, but no exceptions to its practice were observed.

It is considered inappropriate for a man to marry a woman older than himself. But age is known in only a vague general way and most men claim they are married to women younger than themselves.

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589 During his adolescence and increasingly so as he grows older, a young man strikes up liaisons with divorced women who are looking for

836 [589] husbands. These women (gower) are sexually available to all men, and are given gifts and market money for the sexual privileges they grant. The typical adolescent male has his first sexual experiences with a woman 582 an older than himself. However, when he decides to marry he usually tries to find a woman of roughly his own or of a junior age group.

885 581 First marriage marks the beginning of adult status for a man. The event announces and enables a move towards semi-independence which is aided and abetted by the avoidance relation between his father and his wife, as well as by the subject-matter avoidance of his marriage in conversations with his parents. Furthermore, he now commands an independent source of cooked food, which he can use for hospitality and its return, whereas previously he was obliged to others for this service. Kanuri males consider this to be one of the most important reasons for getting married, especially at the lower ranks of society.

885 581 264 437 To understand the value placed on this function of marriage it must be realized that men from about the age of fifteen or sixteen onwards like to eat in the company of other men. Without a wife, a young man must join a group of eaters one (or more) of whose wives prepare the food. For this privilege he is obligated to the food provider, an obligation which may include hoeing his farm, going on messages for him, helping him repair his compound, etc. With a wife a young man can return eating favours on the same terms, thus equating himself to his hosts and creating obligation (a) for return meals from men who have wives, and (b) 581 of a diffuse nature from men who have none. It will be shown later that a wife is also valued as a socio-economic asset in the determination of her husband's productive capacities.

583 434 Today, almost all men in rural areas, and many in the city, derive some of the money for marriage from the cash crop. This determines

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584 encouraged to increase his bridewealth offer and also to increase his kwororam gifts to the girl's grandmother (she had no mother in the compound) in order to increase his chances of acceptability. Only after enlarging his offer and his kwororam before witnesses did the anxious suitor discover that he was the victim of a ruse, and that there was no other bidder for the girl.

The kwororam is not considered part of the bridewealth within this present discussion or by the Kanuri themselves because it is not necessarily returnable by the girl's family if the arrangements proceed no further. It is therefore exactly what its name implies, a fee or set of gifts given for the privilege of asking and smoothing out any opposition from female relatives to the future negotiations between the girl's guardian and the would-be suitor.

The kwororam applies only to non-preferential virgin marriages. It is not practised in cousin marriage because these unions are arranged years before they are consummated. In non-virgin marriage the money and
587 [836] gifts which the man gives to the woman while he is sleeping with her, as a divorced woman, serve instead as the initiatory behaviour which may or may not lead to marriage. The man may also give small gifts of some cloth, soap, perfume, or other women's sundries to any senior female relative of the divorced woman, especially if she is quite a young girl or woman who values her elder's opinion.

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584 The Kanuri recognize that this practice has the utility of allowing some time to elapse while the parties prepare to go more deeply and seriously into creating the marriage relationship.

If there has been a kwororam, the luwaliram occurs one to three months afterwards. This payment is the largest single amount given by the male (with the aid of his supporters) to the female's group. It

593 of the above variables make such conformity to cultural patterns extremely
565 difficult among the lower status ranks of the population, i.e., for most
183 of the people.

837 Closely associated with the above factors, but not directly
562 determinative of male dominance, are the Kanuri patterns of marital fidelity and divorce. Marital chastity is considered an ideal behaviour norm for both men and women, although almost the entire weight of the prescription falls upon the married woman, which is a logical consequence
[554] of the cultural ideal of male dominance. Male marital chastity is given only sham acceptance as an ethical standard by most men, except for the most highly moral, such as some religious leaders aspire to, or very respectable judges, or any other person who wishes to set himself up as a paragon of virtue and reap the benefits of status which such a reputation confers.(1)

837 Men may marry up to four wives in the Muslim world and be-
836 cause there are always zower (divorced women) in Bornu who are avail-
562 able sexually to men, there are a great deal of extra-marital sexual
[595] relations by men which for all intents and purposes are culturally sanctioned. In other words, social reality and every day ethical standards give to men much freedom of sexual behaviour at all times whether or not they are married. This holds true for a bachelor, as it does for a man with one, two, three or four wives. On the other hand, a woman is supposed to turn on and off her sexual freedom in and out of marriage. While married, cultural norms prescribe that she make herself

[829] [829] (1) The Kanuri believe that strict adherence to all moral injunctions of their culture is so difficult and so rare that any person actually practicing such a life of complete moral integrity is very "powerful." His sanctity is so great as to render his person actually dangerous; so much so, it is related, that even the clothes of such a man have power to inflict good or evil on others.

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562 available only to her husband and this turns to sexual freedom and experimentation when she is a divorced woman.(1)

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562 This results in much marital infidelity on the part of married men and women. As we have seen, this can take a sanctioned and an unsanctioned form for men, while for married women any extra-marital sexual intercourse is considered to be adultery. Thus X, a Magumeri man, well known for his extra-marital sex relations woke up a local official late one night and asked him to come and see the woman whom X had brought to his compound. This was to ensure public recognition of the fact that he was sleeping with a sower (divorced [593] woman) and not someone's wife. When asked what his wife thought of his behaviour X replied that she did not like it. He added that it was none of her business and she could leave him if she wished.

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684 On the other hand, Kanuri men are usually extremely suspicious of their wives. One man whose wife attended local dances used to come to these evening celebrations to make sure that no one shone a flashlight on his spouse while she was dancing. The only time that this did occur the husband reported the incident to the Village Head who in turn locked up the voyeur for the night. This same woman was observed on several occasions entering single men's sleeping huts while her husband was away on trading trips.

837 Even one seemingly submissive woman, the wife of an upper class man, was observed to blossom out suddenly and visit strange

[589] (1) This is not meant to imply that the woman has complete freedom, even when divorced. A woman may have one or two men supporting her and sleeping with her while she is divorced (one at a time is more common), often for only periods of a week or two at a time. Women who sleep with too many men at the same time while divorced are considered bad marriage risks and tend to be regarded as acting somewhat more like a prostitute, rather than a divorced woman, who should really be going through a series of "trial" marriages, one of which will eventually lead to the real thing.